

1. Describe the practice proposed for recognition and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative and how it promotes high student achievement.

The practice proposed for recognition is the ARTTS project (**Art Related Topics Touching Students**). ARTTS was based upon the idea of using the humanities as a way to promote student achievement, community involvement, civic pride and awareness of local history. The practice was motivated by the belief that the Arts are what give our lives meaning and pleasure, are reflective of cultural values, and can be used to promote unity, solidarity, patriotism, and academic excellence.

The ARTTS project was designed to use the visual and performing arts as a valuable tool to enhance learning across all disciplines while immersing students in the culture and tradition of their community. The practice emphasized that when students are given an opportunity to appreciate the music and art that has shaped the community in which they live, they truly understand their own history.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach to building an appreciation for the past, the ARTTS project used the visual and performing arts as a focal point, but integrated math, science, language arts and even physical education and the practical arts. It was designed to be a school-wide project, with each grade level playing a role in the yearlong endeavor.

Grades three through six used collaborative learning research groups to study selected time periods in history and create authentic projects based upon the local history, music, art, and technology of the historical era. The classes then created a comprehensive production called "*Our Town Through the Eyes of Our Children*" that used music, dance, and drama to illustrate their research. As this was taking place, the school chorus learned songs and created compositions based upon local history as well as patriotic tunes. Using authentic crafts from historical time periods, the art classes created replicas of important local landmarks and historical architecture. The primary grades (K-2) visited community sites and carried out an exposition on local history featuring authentic clothing, games, music and simulations. Important guests such as elected officials and local historians came to the school to speak to the children. The culminating event of the ARTTS project was a grand recital at the end of the school year that was performed for the community featuring student productions, historically flavored music of the chorus and band, and examples of student artwork and class projects.

ARTTS Project objectives were to:

- Give students an opportunity to use music, art, dance and drama elements to express ideas through artistic products and performances.
- Introduce students to the importance and appreciation of the visual and performing arts in their daily lives.
- Use the visual and performing arts to understand historical and cultural influences and to promote community pride and civic involvement.
- Provide students with an opportunity to develop and refine research skills for real application and using technology as a tool for learning.
- Develop opportunities for students to employ decision making, problem solving, critical thinking skills; communicating ideas, thoughts and feelings individually and collectively.
- Create a permanent photo resource of historic monuments, and architectural sites, and collections of literature and music for staff and students to use.
- Create a school wide culminating production that would be presented to the community demonstrating the yearlong work of the ARTTS project and highlight the uniqueness of the community.

- Create a process whereby the students are motivated to learn traditional academic subject areas through the arts.

This program was innovative because it used the visual and performing arts as the unifying force behind a school-wide curricular project. This is contrary to what is usually done in schools, where the arts are most often perceived to be supplementary as to what they can add to the traditional curriculum. Furthermore, the ARTTS project was unique in that it embraced the visual and performing arts as a vehicle to bring local history alive for the children and the community and as a way to promote civic pride and involvement. Though the instructional approach of using movement and emotions, students discovered new talents and skills and were exposed to a world that they had never known before. Students were able to master concepts that were thought, for many, to be beyond their abilities. Also, the ARTTS project, as a school wide endeavor, gave all the children an opportunity to be involved in the process of creating and performing, and provided an appreciation of the joy and meaning of the arts in life. Integrating the arts in academics was one of the best ways to reach every child.

2. **List the specific Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses those standard(s). Provide an example to substantiate your response.**

The most noteworthy and unique accomplishment of the ARTTS Project was that instead of the Visual and Performing Arts Core Curriculum Content Standards being integrated into the curriculum as an afterthought, this school-wide educational endeavor used the Visual and Performing Arts as a galvanizing force to get children interested and excited about learning. The ARTTS Project employed the following Core Curriculum Content Standards:

Visual and Performing Arts Standard 1.1: All students will acquire knowledge and skills that increase aesthetic awareness in dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Students were given an opportunity to design and perform dramatic, visual and musical artworks based upon their historical research and interpretation of the culture.

Visual and Performing Arts Standard 1.2: All students will refine perceptual, intellectual, physical, and technical skills through creating dance, music, theater, and/or visual arts. Through ongoing peer and instructor evaluation, students were empowered to make changes and refine their presentations/projects.

Visual and Performing Arts Standard 1.3: All student will utilize arts elements and arts media to produce artistic products and performances. All students were encouraged to create authentic artistic work using specific guided elements and media such as felt media, impression paintings, fashion design, etc. Class lessons, field trips, guest speakers and assemblies guided students to seek out and employ existing artwork to authenticate their presentations.

Visual and Performing Arts Standard 1.4: All students will demonstrate knowledge of the process of critique. Each student assessed, judged and articulated presentations using the critique process to make the overall performance successful.

Visual and Performing Arts Standard 1.5: All students will identify the various historical, social, and cultural influences and traditions which have generated artistic accomplishments throughout the ages and which continue to shape contemporary arts. A town walk to study historical architecture and art forms helped students make present day connections to the past, as in art class they made felt media replications. Research enabled students to identify and develop an appreciation for those influences and traditions that shaped their particular presentation by composing original work incorporating melody and lyrics.

Visual and Performing Arts Standard 1.6: All students will develop design skills for planning the form and function of space, structures, objects, sound, and events. Large panels (8' x 8') were designed and utilized to display student-generated pictures and felt cutouts as a backdrop to the production. These panels were displayed in the State Capital Building from November 5-13, 2001.

Physical Education Standard 2.5: All students will learn and apply movement concepts and skills that foster participation in physical activities throughout life. Period dances were choreographed and performed.

Language Arts Standard 3.1: All students will speak for a variety of real purpose and audiences. Dialogues and dramas were written, rehearsed and performed on video and in front of a live audience. Examples were: newspaper dialogue, Civil War drama and reenactments.

Language Arts Standard 3.3: All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes. Students wrote scripts and stories pertaining to their historical figure, topic and/or culture and varied their format for videotaped and live performance.

Science Standard 5.3: All students will develop an understanding of how people of various cultures have contributed to the advancement of science and technology, and how major discoveries and events have advanced science and technology. Using a "look back in time" approach, students studied photographs and newspapers from (1650 to modern day). A Jazz Assembly enabled students to make cultural, historical and technological connections to their presentation.

Social Studies Standard 6.2: All students will learn democratic citizenship through the humanities, by studying literature, art, history and philosophy, and related fields. By studying the founders of their community and creating art, song and skits based upon historical events the children learned the importance of democratic citizenship, technology, information and other tools.

Workplace Readiness Standard 2: Using a URL link on our school's web page, students employed the use of the Internet to research topics. Through the use of FM headsets, students and teachers effectively communicated during the rehearsals and performance.

Workplace Readiness Standard 3: All students will use critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Problem solving skills were demonstrated through solo performance and dance preparation, costume design and instrumental and choral ensemble practices.

Workplace Readiness Standard 4: Students were encouraged to have a "personal stake" in the overall production using audition processes and input of selection of program performance elements.

3. Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met. Provide assessments and data to show how the practice met these needs.

The ARTTS program was developed in response to a teacher-initiated needs assessment which indicated that students could benefit from an integrated curriculum that would build upon our current humanities, technology and general curriculum. Furthermore, our student mobility rate of 33%, over twice the state average, indicated that our mobile students could benefit from a project that would connect them to their community and provide a sense of belonging. Our diverse student population, consisting of 20% on free and reduced lunch, 30% from single parent homes and 21% multiple disabled, could benefit from a unifying, school-wide project wherein

each student could contribute to the project on an equal basis. It was acknowledged that integrating the arts in academics was one of the best ways to reach every child.

It was decided that a strong arts foundation would build upon creativity, concentration, problem solving, coordination, on-task behavior, self efficacy, academics and self-discipline for students and that the curriculum would be enhanced by using the visual and performing arts as a bridge and unifying force. For example, in the past, students studied aspects of our community's history through classroom lessons and trips. This project provided for the students a broad framework to understand the societal and political ideas through the total historical context of their community, state and country by immersing them in the culture and tradition of their community throughout the year..

Documentation of the **ARTTS** project occurred by multiple assessment measures, many demonstrated by authentic understanding through the fine and performing arts. One measure, a student survey indicated that **100%** of the students felt that the ARTTS Project was a positive experience. Assessment of student learning in this survey also indicated increased student knowledge and interest in the following areas: **Music 70%, Theatre 35%, History 81%, Performances 51%, Dance 48%, and Visual Arts 42%**, indicating a high degree of success in meeting objectives.

Further indicators of success are as follows:

- 100% student participation in student research and project completion
- 100% student use of technology application resources, leading to greater comfort level and proficiency in accessing and applying information
- 100% student participation in final production, as presenters, actors, vocal and instrumental performers and stage crew
- All students were exposed to a myriad of career options during the course of this project, from the wide range of careers in the arts to careers in the diverse fields of media, communication, public service, and history
- 100% attendance of stakeholders at the final performance
- All students were exposed to and experienced the artistic elements and techniques involved in a theatrical performance
- Faculty contributed individual artistic expertise and were role models for the students, highlighting the lifelong importance of the arts in daily life

4. Describe how you would replicate the practice in another school and/or district.

This project is easy to replicate and the culminating project can be large or small based on available resources. The school would first make a commitment to using an interdisciplinary approach for humanities and core content curriculum instruction utilizing the visual and performing arts as a focal point for learning for all students. After identification of historical people, places and events to study, individual classes or grade levels could then research events based on a pre-determined time-line. The correlation between historical and contemporary process would be emphasized through art and music. Student acquisition of knowledge and skills that contribute to their understanding and appreciation of dance, music theater and visual arts will be a lifelong process.